

reflections

MAGAZINE

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Today, it's a dirty word. Where did it come from?

reflecting on safe workplace practices across the north

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WSCC

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young worker:
(noun) **worker**
under the age of 25

455

17

56

31

37

19

**is the number of young workers
injured last year**

455

**injuries that
could have
been prevented**



SAFE

To learn how to protect
yourself at work, contact the
WSCC at **1-800-661-0792**.

WSCC

**Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission**

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455 is based on statistics for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Nunavut Construction Corporation makes safety a priority with the Go Safe Program

Our Mission is to promote workplace safety and care for injured workers.

WSCC Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission



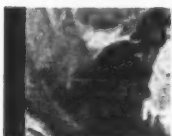
Committing to safety through education.



Workplace violence is growing in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Read about two of the top three professions facing this today.



Safety practices are followed everyday.



Today, it's a dirty word. Where did it come from?

Can You Find Me Now? Personal Locators can save your life.

Do your employees know what to do if they are alone and have an emergency?

Harvesting is considered the base of our traditional economy, and is thriving in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Are you wearing the right eye protection for what you are doing?

Is your calendar marked?

■ Mini-Bit: Advice from Outside 34

President's Letter



Safety and prevention are part of our everyday lives. We do what it takes to keep ourselves and our families free from harm. We buckle our seatbelts before leaving for work, look both ways before crossing the street, and lock the doors before crawling into bed.

At the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) the safety of northern workers

and employers is our number one priority. We want to provide you with the resources and tools to ensure you return home safe, every day. *Reflections* is just one of the many resources we offer northerners to achieve this goal.

Reflections is designed with you in mind. With current information on safety practices and strategies, services and programs, it strengthens the lines of communication between workers, employers, and our Commission. As our number one priority, we work to ensure that at work, home, or play, you can relate to and apply the information within this magazine.

Included in this issue is an article on a northern employer's commitment to Go Safe. The article on asbestos includes a history of safety. There are articles on the benefits of mentoring in the workplace and passing safety on to the next generation. We also highlight the harvesters program.

Safety is a commitment for life. Make safety your number one priority. Together we can eliminate workplace injuries and illnesses.

Anne S. Clark
President & CEO

Governance Council

Denny Rodgers Chairperson

Denny Rodgers of Inuvik was first appointed Chairperson of the Governance Council on October 25, 2005 for a two-year term. Having served as a public interest representative since May 2003, Denny held the positions of Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee, Vice Chairperson of the Governance Council, and Acting Chairperson of the Governance Council from May 1, 2005, until his formal appointment to Chairperson. Mr. Rodgers was reappointed Chairperson for a two-year term in October 2007.

J.B. McDonald Director, Labour Representative

J.B. (Ben) McDonald of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as a Labour Representative effective April 1, 2008, for a three-year term.

John Vander Velde Director, Labour Representative

John Vander Velde of Iqaluit was appointed to the Governance Council as a Labour Representative effective September 1, 2008, for a three-year term.

Bill Aho Director, Employer Representative

Bill Aho of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as an Employer Representative on May 1, 2004, for a two-year term. Mr. Aho was reappointed for a two-year term in May 2006, and again in May 2008.

Karin McDonald Director, Employer Representative

Karin McDonald of Inuvik was appointed to the Governance Council as an Employer Representative on October 15, 2004, for a three-year term. In October 2007, Ms. McDonald was re-appointed for a two-year term.

George Kuksuk Director, Public Interest Representative

George Kuksuk of Arviat was appointed to the position of Public Interest Representative on May 31, 2004, for a three-year term. Mr. Kuksuk was reappointed for a three-year term in June 2007.

Fred Koe Director

Public Interest Representative
Fred Koe of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as a Public Interest Representative on February 1, 2007, for a three-year term.

For more information on any of our Governance Council members please visit our website at www.wcb.nt.ca or www.wcbnunavut.ca

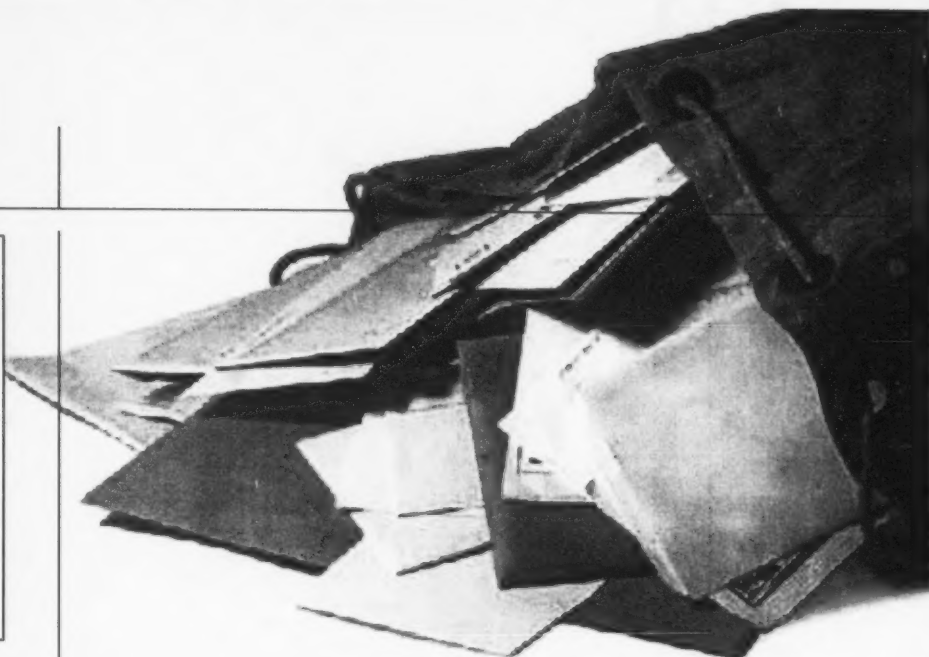
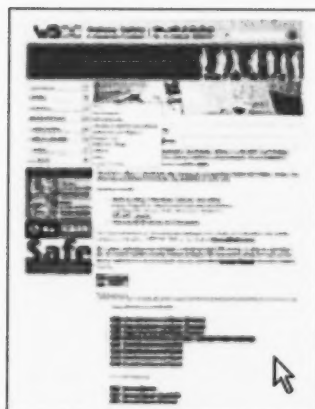
Mailbag



Great magazine! This was my first time seeing it, and it is very good. I'm wondering if you could post the Summer 2008 edition on your website? I found Summer 2007 and Winter 2008 on your publications page, but no Summer 2008!

Thanks,
Eddie Smith
Manager, Corporate Health,
Safety & Environment
Northwest Territories Power Corporation

Summer 2008 is up and running. Thanks for the heads up. Electronic copies of *Reflections* can be found on our web site at: http://www.wcb.nt.ca/your_wcb/publications.html



Did We Deliver?

We want to hear from you – good or bad.
Let us know what you think.

The Mission of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WSCC) is clear – promote workplace safety and care for injured workers. *Reflections* plays a big part in getting the job done.

We want to hear from you – good or bad. If *Reflections* inspires you, encourages you, gives you insight into how the WSCC works, or just gets you thinking about the importance of safety in the workplace, please let us know.

Send your comments and/or
questions to:

reflections MAGAZINE
Box 8888, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R3

Or send us an email at:
reflections@wcb.nt.ca



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F. 867.979.8501
Toll Free. 1.877.404.4407
Toll Free Fax. 1.866.979.8501

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F. 867.645.5601
Toll Free. 1.877.404.8878

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151 Mackenzie Road
Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0
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F. 867.678.2302

If you or your employees travel in remote areas you should invest in one of the many different types of personal location devices.



Can You Find Me Now?

PERSONAL LOCATORS FOR WORK

So, you send your employees out on the land or in a boat and something goes terribly wrong. Without your knowledge and far away from cellular service, your employee gets hurt or has engine trouble and is stranded. You know as an employer your employees are not expected home for a week and will not see another person. What now?

Jack Kruger, RCMP "G" Division Search and Rescue Coordinator says, "Each year in Canada's North, the RCMP respond to hundreds of missing people whose scenarios are exactly like this. Poor trip planning or no planning for unexpected emergencies is the main cause of searches. In today's day and age, with all the technology available, most of these searches could be narrowed down considerably in time and money spent."

What exactly does that mean – "with all the technology available?"

It's simple. If you or your employees travel in remote areas you should invest in one of the many different types of personal location devices. All work on batteries and some are waterproof. In the northern winter conditions, you will have to keep the device warm to make sure the batteries continue to work.

Personal location devices work from the Global Positioning System (GPS). They have the ability to pinpoint your location with 99% accuracy in most parts of the world, can call for emergency services and can save your trip information.

If that isn't enough, many of these devices have gone interactive! Using Google Maps, employers and co-workers can track your progress with the "ask for help" function. They can also give help, if added to your contact list, which is a great feature if information is needed or a question needs to be answered. The "check in" function allows employees to confirm when they arrive safely.

If your employee is in actual need of assistance, these devices can virtually save lives. By activating the "help needed" function, their position will be transmitted to authorities who will dispatch the applicable search and rescue units. Just ask four boaters who accidentally pressed the "help needed" button. Help arrived in a short time only to find embarrassed boaters.

"Yes", says Kruger, "this happens from time to time but at least we were able to find them very quickly. Had this been a real emergency we saved time, which is a crucial element of any rescue."

In most cases, these personal locator devices fit the bill for safety, reliability, and performance. Although there are a number of locators on the market today, you must find the one that suits your needs. Remember, our northern climate is not forgiving. A personal locator saves lives and gives peace of mind. wsc

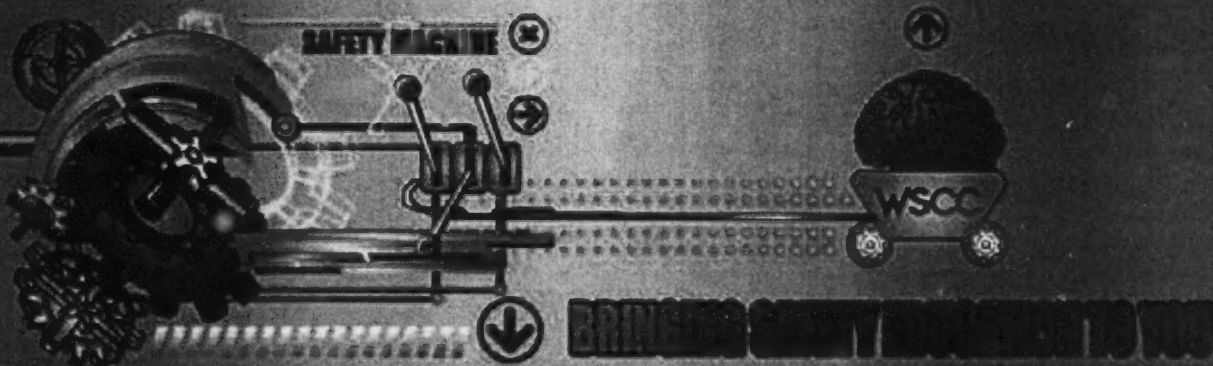
EDUCATION THE SAFETY MACHINE

Get your safety gears rolling by making safety education a top priority.

The WSCC offers FREE safety education programs to employers and workers. Programs run throughout the year. Keep your eyes on local media for program dates and times or get clicking on www.wcb.nt.ca for more information.

**Call 1-800-661-0792
AND SWITCH ON THE SAFETY MACHINE.**

Find a current schedule of WSCC safety education programs at www.wcb.nt.ca.



WSCC

Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission

Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission

Check-in Procedures

"E.T. phone home." All this famous little extra-terrestrial wanted to do was let someone know he was ok.



Do your employees work under conditions where, if injured, they may not be able to secure assistance?

Working alone is considered a workplace hazard. With our wide-open landscape and vast traveling distances, it's a situation we northerners can't always avoid. Did you know it's your job, as an employer, to provide workers with a way to check-in, and to train them on check-in procedures?

To address this hazard, incorporate a safe work procedure in your health and safety program. Ensure you

provide appropriate training and safety education. Employees must recognize and understand the risks and hazards associated with working alone or in remote locations.

Each circumstance for working alone is different. When assessing your working conditions consider the following:

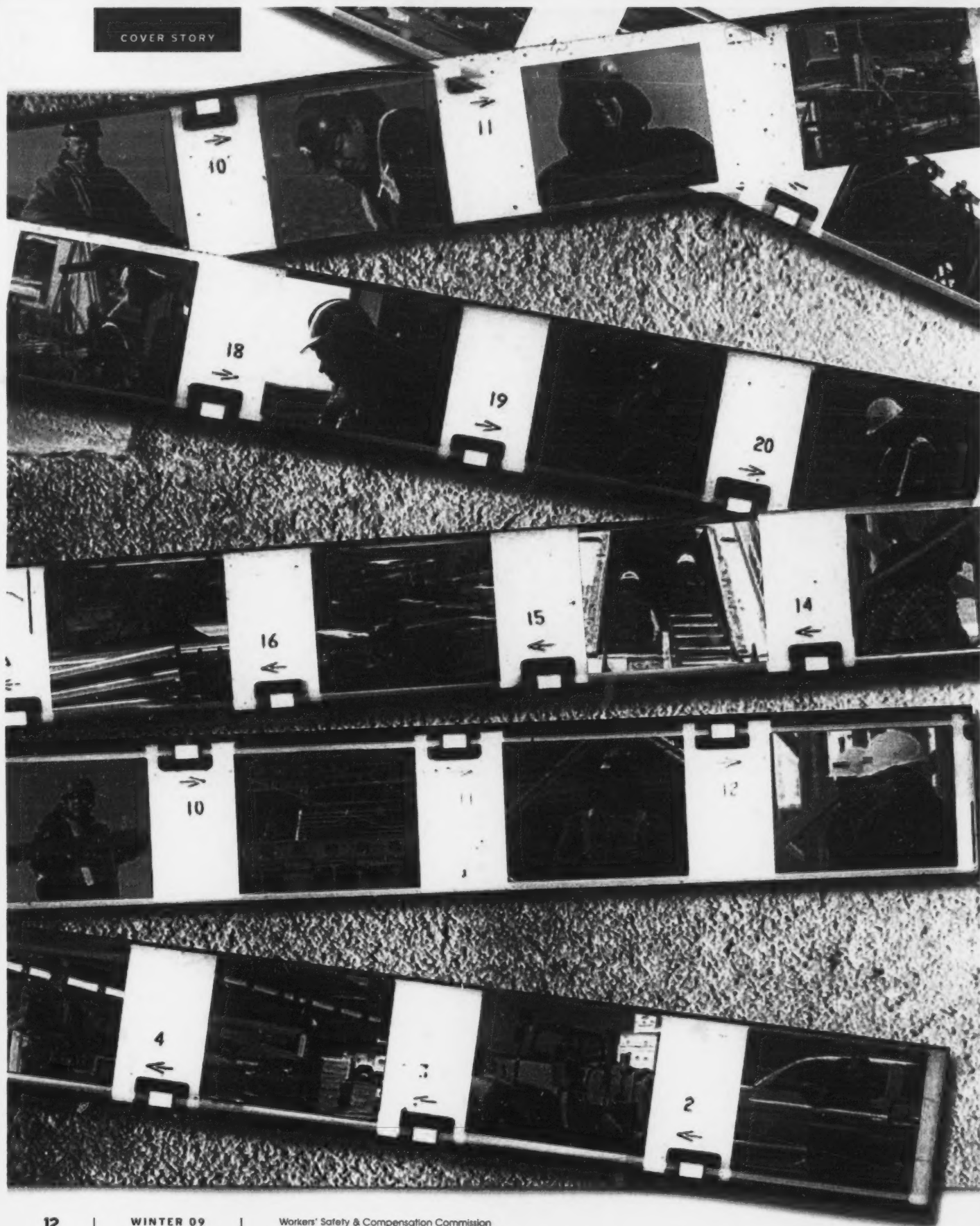
- ▶ length of time worker is required to work alone;
- ▶ communication available;
- ▶ location of the worker; and
- ▶ type or nature of work.

These conditions will help determine the frequency of check-ins needed to

ensure workers' safety. When writing your check-in procedure, you may also wish to include:

- ▶ a workplan, or trip plan, so you know where your workers are at all times;
- ▶ a main contact person, contact number, and an emergency back-up to ensure your workers know who to check with;
- ▶ a check-in schedule;
- ▶ a code word used to alert the contact to a potentially violent situation, it will let your contact person know that your worker is in a situation they can't handle on their own; and
- ▶ an emergency action plan, what to do if check-in is missed or communication is lost.

The most important thing to consider is the safety of your employees. Stuck on a strange planet E.T. was lucky to find a friend in Elliot. Practice due diligence. Don't leave your employees lost in the dark with no where to turn. Provide them with the means to "phone home." WSCC





A Model Workplace

It's like clockwork. Every Friday afternoon, when the little hand rests at the three and the big hands creep closer to the six, workers file out of the framed building, slide out of truck and machine cabs, abandon the wood yard, and make their way to the lunchroom trailer. It's time for the weekly toolbox safety meeting. It always starts on time and no one wants to be late. Attendance is mandatory but reinforcing the rule isn't a big concern. Sometimes greeted with pizza or, if weather cooperates, an afternoon BBQ, the next half hour is the best part of most workers' week.

NCC Development Ltd. Superintendent, Clarence Synard, started holding toolbox meetings in 2006. Based in Iqaluit, on Baffin Island, Synard introduced his workers to a safety movement that's gaining momentum. "It's phenomenal how much it's changed in these three years. Safety meetings last 30 to 40 minutes," explains Synard. "If people have a concern, they'll talk about it. People are speaking up and they know their responsibilities. An attitude of safety on my site will never be frowned upon."

Synard isn't preaching to empty pews. When you scan the lunchroom, it's obvious a culture of safety is accepted at all levels of the company. A well-worn Go Safe ball cap sits on the bench beside work coveralls, and safety stickers adorn the main door. Before leaving the trailer, the words STOP & THINK in English and Inuktitut remind workers of the steps in hazard assessment.

"Safety is everything here. We've got workers reminding other workers if they do something wrong," says Sam Follett a carpenter foreman with NCC. "This is all from safety meetings. Ignorance isn't an excuse. If it takes two hours to do something properly for a fifteen minute job, Clarence wants us to do it."

One of the bigger construction companies operating in Nunavut, NCC currently manages seven different worksites throughout the territory. During peak construction season, NCC employs between 50 to 60 people full time. For many northern companies, retaining good workers year to year is often a problem, but NCC proudly boasts a retention rate of around ninety percent. Synard credits much of their success to safety. "People feel better working for a company with a focus on safety."

NCC General Manager Brent Crooks couldn't agree more, ▶





"I thought Go Safe was well organized. It's almost a safety program for dummies."

adding it's the workers who drive their commitment to safety. "Our company is 10 years old and one hundred percent Inuit owned. Being aboriginal and northern, our Board (of Directors), is here for the long haul. This is a multigenerational entity," says NCC General Manager Brent Crooks. "The most important resource is people. You can buy tools but you can't buy people."

In the fall of 2007, NCC became a Go Safe pilot company. Go Safe is a partnership program, developed by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to help northern employers develop and implement effective

health and safety programs. Go Safe provides employers with the resources and tools to build health and safety programs tailored to meet their specific needs. To encourage stakeholder feedback and participation in the development of Go Safe, the WSCC approached northern employers to try out the program and provide comments.

"We had a good relationship with NCC before Go Safe. When Go Safe came up we thought they were the best candidate because they're really proactive," says Heather MacDougall, a WSCC Safety Officer based in Iqaluit. "They're also really well known in the territory and if we started with them, all their

subcontractors would be exposed to Go Safe."

While Synard already had a health and safety program in place, he was quick to sign up for Go Safe. He used the program to fill voids in his existing program. "I thought Go Safe was well organized. It's almost a safety program for dummies. Anyone should be able to follow it," explains Synard. "It is user friendly and self-explanatory. For me, it helped me re-organize. I found things lacking in my program, and it helped me improve them."

MacDougall's been working closely with Synard for the past year and commends Synard's determination and diligence, "Clarence gets feedback on everything he does. He takes constructive criticism and adds it to his program. He goes over



and above what we've suggested for him to do."

Synard attributes much of NCC's success with Go Safe, to their strong working relationship with the WSCC. "The general perception is that the WSCC is there to slow progress and shut them (businesses) down. They see them as an officer coming to fine them. It's wrong. It's totally the opposite from that. It's not the good cop, bad cop thing. They want to help. If you're afraid of the safety officers, you're afraid of safety."

This winter marks MacDougall's second anniversary in Iqaluit. Still relatively new to the north, Go Safe helped her learn more about northern industry, while enabling her to build stronger relationships with employers and workers. "I know a lot of their names. Instead of just walking through sites with my clipboard, people come up and we have conversations. I'm less of a white hard hat walking around."

This doesn't mean the WSCC treats NCC any differently than other companies. Random unannounced site visits still happen and Synard wouldn't have it any other way. "It's a good pressure. If you feel like you've done everything and you let your

"Safety is everything here. We've got workers reminding other workers if they do something wrong,"

guard down, that's when something might happen."

"We still get comments for things the WSCC sees," agrees Brent Crooks. "There's no favoritism and we don't want any. We're empowered within. You don't wait for the WSCC to tell you something is wrong. Clarence makes the workers participate."

Worker participation starts the minute they're hired. One of Synard's biggest Go Safe accomplishments is the development of an orientation package. "I tried to come up with a way that as soon as a person walks on-site, they know my stance and the company's stance on safety. They have to read it and sign it."

"Their orientation package is comprehensive. It's very proactive not reactive, which is what we see on a lot of northern sites," adds MacDougall.

NCC's work isn't done. Moving forward, Synard will continue monitoring the effectiveness of their health and safety program. On an annual basis, he'll conduct safety self-audits to identify strengths and weaknesses. With that information in hand, NCC will then create new priorities, with the ultimate goal of lower incident and claim rates.

MacDougall hopes NCC's success with Go Safe will motivate other northern employers to jump on board with the

program. "I'd like to see it (Go Safe) be more prominent in the smaller companies," says MacDougall.

"Those are the ones who don't have the time or money to hire an outside consultant or do it themselves. Go Safe is an excellent option." Synard is quick to remark that if he can do it, others can too. He's challenging other companies to get involved in Go Safe and regardless of whether they're his competition or not, he'll even mentor them through the program. "I'm willing to help anyone. I want to see all the jobs safe. I'll show them my information and I'll coach them along."

It's about keeping your family safe. At least that's how Synard sees it. Synard's father has been coming north to work for the past twenty-eight years, so he knows first hand how important it is for workers to return home safe and sound after each rotation. "When you hear of a construction worker dying, you feel like you've lost one of your own. I want to send everyone home safe. That's my goal everyday. If something bad happened on my site, I might not be able to work. I take it personally."



For more information on the WSCC's Go Safe program, contact Prevention Services at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit.

WSCC

RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

Employer Benefits:

- stronger workplace safety culture;
- increased workplace morale;
- reduced or eliminated WSCC claims costs; and
- sustained skilled workforce.

Worker Benefits:

- increased morale;
- gained independence;
- quickened recovery time (depending on injury); and
- lessened financial burden of being off work.

For information on Return-to-Work Programs, contact the WSCC at 1-800-661-0792.

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Don't get left in the cold.
Return to work.

Looking for Insight?

Find it online. *Insight: A Look At Safety & Service* is an e-newsletter for the general public, workers, employers, healthcare professionals, and self-employed residents of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Filled with current information on safety and WSCC operations, it gives you insight on how to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Sign up online today at www.wcb.nt.ca or www.wcbnunavut.ca.

WSCC Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission



Promote workplace safety and care for injured workers.

Mentorship: Learn from Experience

Monkey see, monkey do. As young children we learned new words, habits, and actions by watching the people we looked up to, literally. Our parents were our mentors and guides to the big world around us.

The same principle we learned as young tots can be applied to how we learn to stay safe at work today. In the workplace, the concept of monkey see, monkey do, goes beyond mimicking a process or behaviour without understanding it. We come to know and understand the processes and procedures, and then apply them safely and consistently.

Statistics show new and young workers are at a greater risk of injury than their experienced co-workers. Which is why mentorship is an important part of a successful health and safety culture. Put simply, a mentor is a teacher, guide, and coach. They lead by example, and are willing to share their experience and knowledge.

If you are new to your career or workplace, you don't have to start at ground zero. There are lifetimes of knowledge from your peers and predecessors waiting to be shared. Mentors are workplace veterans. They know what works, what doesn't,

the fastest way to get hurt, and best practices to ensure you make it home with all of your fingers and toes.

"There is a very real difference between learning skills from a textbook and learning those same skills from someone with 20 years of experience," says Heather MacDougall, Safety Officer with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. "The benefits are incalculable."

Every mentor's lessons come from trying, learning, knowing, and making mistakes. In reality they become a real life instruction manual. A book can outline a proper procedure, but it can't explain the story behind it. Mentors give you the benefit of knowing why it works. Their experience, and each of their mistakes, are your guide to staying safe.

The Kimberlite Career and Technical Center (KCTC) in Yellowknife, NT, takes mentorship to a new level. Students in grades 7-12 have the

opportunity to explore skilled trades through exploratory and Career and Technology Studies (CTS) courses. The KCTC offers courses in mechanics, welding, construction, hair styling, Lego robotics, mine training, engineering, and technology.

All instructors are Red Seal journeypersons, which means students benefit from true industry experience. As past apprentices, KCTC instructors experienced the benefits of mentorship, and pass it on to their students. ▶





"The instructors love being with the students," says Larry Connolly, Director of the KCTC. "Both the students and instructors take a great deal of pride in their work."

Classes operate like an apprenticeship program. It combines hands-on experience with technical training and instruction. The small class sizes at the KCTC allow students to work closely with their instructor. "The one-on-one instruction and coaching is a great benefit to the students," explains Larry. "They can ask questions, and receive feedback and encouragement. Students learn something new everyday."

At KCTC, safety is a top priority in the students' learning experience. Everyone is equipped with the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) before entering their workspace and safety procedures are reviewed regularly. With safety reinforced every step of the way, students are well on their way to becoming future workplace safety ambassadors.

We all know a skilled worker is a safe worker, which is why safety

is also an integral part of both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut's Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification program. "One of the goals of the program is to provide a skilled and available workforce to meet the needs and demands of industry," say Sandy Napier, Manager, Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

As a journey person, and past instructor, Sandy knows all too well the benefits apprenticeship and mentorship provide. An apprenticeship is a partnership of sorts. An employer agrees to hire an apprentice, and provides the hands-on training needed to complete the certification. Apprentice work for a progressive wage while they learn their trades. Both parties benefit. Apprentices work as they learn, and are able to enter the workforce right away. Employers benefit too, and receive an instant return on their investment.

"80 percent of their learning is through mentorship, hands-on training and coaching, and the remaining 20 percent is learned by structured theory in a classroom," explains Sandy. "Safety is taught in the workplace, and reinforced in the classroom."

Apprenticeship programs not only open doors, they also continue the cycle of mentorship. Journey persons become mentors and role models to new apprentices. They coach, teach, and pass on their work experience,

just as their mentor did for them. They take their knowledge and share it.

Although there is a lot to be said about the success of apprenticeship programs, workplace mentorship doesn't have to be in the form of a formal program. Keep it simple by pairing a qualified worker who has great safety habits, with a new or young worker as part of your orientation process. Choose a method that will work well for your company.

To create a mentorship program of your own, follow these steps:

1. Set program goals.

Ask yourself what you want your mentorship program to achieve. Do you want to help orientate new and young workers, recruit new employees, or build knowledge?

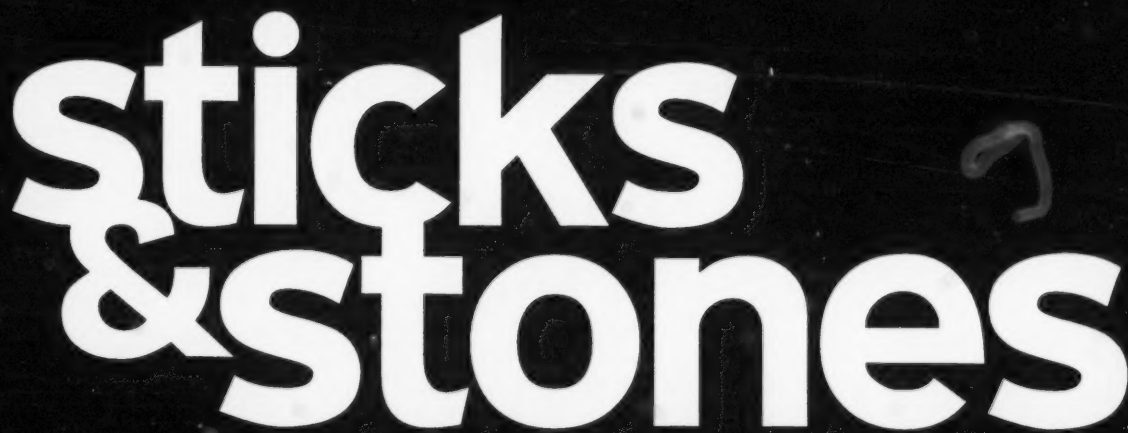
2. Define roles and responsibilities.

How does the relationship work? Help determine the focus and purpose of why workers participate. Clarify the accountability of everyone involved; management, mentor, new worker.

3. Monitor progress & review results.

Measure whether the program meets your goals and the goals of your participants. Give participants the opportunity to provide feedback and make improvements as needed.

Including a mentorship component in your health and safety program is a great way to plan for the future of your company. Through mentoring you not only pass on common goals and business practices, but safety philosophies and principles. You light the safety torch for the next generation. WSCC



sticks & stones

Violence in the Workplace

Anyone who's ever worked in the service or retail sector has probably suffered the wrath of an angry customer. I thought I was tough until the first time I was berated by a disgruntled client. After several minutes of a thorough tongue-lashing, I was left feeling completely violated. ►

Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me... What a bunch of BLEEP! Names do hurt and they are a form of violence.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety defines workplace violence as "any act in which a person is abused, threatened, intimidated, or assaulted in his or her employment." This includes threatening behaviour, verbal or written threats, harassment, verbal abuse, and physical attacks. The spectrum ranges from shaking fists, throwing objects, and destroying property, to bullying, hitting, and pushing.

According to Statistics Canada, 1 in 5 violent incidents happen at work in Canada. A violent incident covers sexual assault, robbery, and physical assault. The "perp" responsible is commonly described as a male under the age of 25.

For me, my perpetrators varied in age, and were both males and females. The common factor linking them, they were all adults (well over the legal age) and should have known better. But what happens when you're not sure whether the attacker knows better, or their judgement is badly clouded?

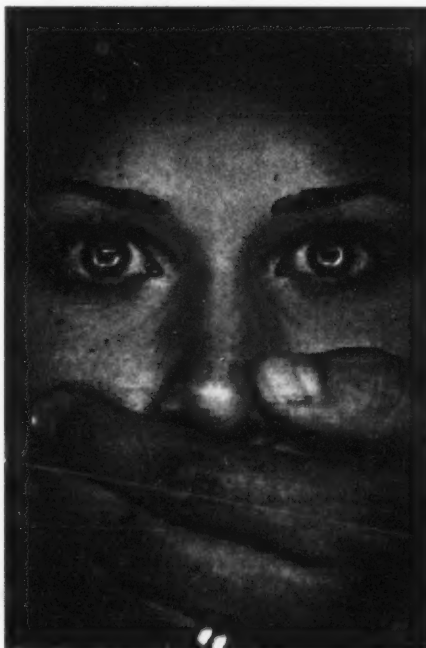
Scenario One: You come face-to-face with a 3'6" blonde with cute pig-tails, sporting a Dora the Explorer backpack. She is not impressed with the class rules. Her little arms and legs are flying in all directions and when her sharp joints make contact, it hurts.

Scenario Two: It's the middle of the night. Their partner is strapped to a gurney being unloaded from the ambulance and rolled into the ER. They're hysterical, crying, and refuse to let go of their partner's hand. You need to get to the patient, but they push you away.

Starts to get a little more complicated, right?

In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, assaults and violent acts (AVA) account for 2% of established yearly WSCC claims. In the last five years, 261 AVA claims were filed, and the average number of days lost from work per claim

was seven. Two of the top three occupational areas affected most by workplace violence are healthcare (36%) and education (11%).



Kathie Pender has 14 years in healthcare under her belt. A registered nurse, Pender is currently the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator with Stanton Territorial Health Authority. "When you come to the hospital, you're already not at your best. You're in an altered state and that can trigger something (negative reactions)." Pender describes parents bringing in sick kids, or family members dealing with aging loved ones. While she understands the root of their emotions, she is quick to add, "that doesn't make it okay."

Unlike the hospital's zero tolerance policy which protects workers, patients, visitors, and the public alike, teachers are presented with a more complicated scenario. "We don't have zero tolerance. We're subject to this (workplace violence) on a regular basis and it is difficult to deny them (students) access to schools and public education," says David Reid, President of the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA).

Like Pender, Reid isn't new to teaching. He has spent over a quarter of a century educating the North and in his new role with the NWTTA, he regularly reviews workplace

"If a worker feels threatened, they call a code white or it is announced overhead. We have a response team that responds to the situation."

incident reports. "Teachers see verbal abuse on a regular basis. It's become more prevalent now and in the last few years. It seems to be more acceptable."

Reid goes on to explain that physical violence is mainly limited to younger grades. Elementary teachers are the ones being bitten, pinched, hit, and kicked. While older students are quick to lip off to teachers, slam doors, and flash the middle finger, the violence rarely escalates to the use of force and/or weapons. That doesn't mean the threat doesn't exist. As more and more schools in the south fall victim to student shootings, the possibility of weapons appearing on school property is a reality. The NWTTA was motivated to bring appropriate safety measures to NWT schools. "The association has taken the lead in having lockdowns as a safety procedure. Four years ago it started with getting a few schools to practice them. Now we're closer to having 90% of schools practicing lockdowns." Reid adds students are getting comfortable with the process and some even ask when the lockdown drills are happening.

Lockdown safety procedures are not limited to worse case scenarios. As Reid describes, they can help with very northern problems, schools in smaller communities face. "This doesn't just have to be for an armed individual; it could also be a wolf or bear in the school playground."

The Stanton Territorial Hospital also has safety procedures in place to handle workplace violence. "We have a colour-coded system for emergency response. Code white is for

a violent or aggressive situation," explains Pender. "If a worker feels threatened, they call a code white or it is announced overhead (through the intercom system). We have a response team that responds to the situation."

Non-violent intervention training is offered to all Stanton Territorial Health Authority workers. Everyone (from nursing staff, doctors, custodians, dieticians, to security services) is encouraged to take the course, to learn how to safely handle violent situations. "This is chemical-free intervention, to protect the aggressor and the worker," says Pender.



For Pender, she practices and promotes the power of numbers. "Call for help. Call a code white. People are an intimidating factor. It can't hurt to yell. You get a reaction out of yelling." Having worked in large hospitals in major city centres, Pender pulls from her collective experiences. "I learned to have people with me and to trust my instincts. Once you've been in that position, you don't want to feel like that again. Like a victim. Powerless."

On the whole, Stanton Territorial handles the majority of workplace violence internally. According to Pender, the RCMP is called for assistance approximately 30% of the time, and the majority of cases involve substance abuse. While drugs and alcohol play a huge part in violent attacks healthcare workers face, Pender adds that mental health disorders or cognitive issues are also factors to consider.

"I think it (workplace violence) is reflective of our society. It is on par with our drug use, alcohol use, and the other

social problems. I don't think it is getting better or worse." Furthermore, Pender admits their incident numbers don't truly reflect the extent of the problem. "There's a lot that isn't reported. The nurses in the ER take a lot of abuse. Any of our pubic units take a lot of abuse. The staff thinks it's a part of daily life. It isn't."

On the national front, male victims of workplace violence are more likely than their female counterparts to report the incident. Stats Canada research shows that 96% of victims turn to an informal source of support for help, and 9 times out of 10, that person is a co-worker.

In the teaching profession, Reid says leaning on your colleagues is a natural part of the process. "You're learning as you go. Especially new teachers; they learn tricks as they go, and rely on seasoned staff to show them the ropes."

While the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) supports a mentorship program for new teachers, Reid believes this employer needs to expand the definition of workplace violence. "We've tried to get the GNWT to recognize that the language in the collective agreement doesn't reflect what's happening. Teachers need protection."

But it isn't just the employer who needs to do some re-evaluating. The answer is found in a more combined approach. "There has to be a change in how society views education and what is acceptable and not acceptable. Parents need to get involved. They can't enable the behaviour."

This view is also supported by Pender. "We have to continue to educate the staff, the patients, and the public in general in terms of our zero tolerance. We have to continue to implement the system we have in place."

**All workers have the right to a safe workplace.
Under Section 4.1 of the Northwest Territories
and Nunavut Safety Acts:**

4. (1) Every employer shall

- (a) maintain his or her establishment in such a

manner that the health and safety of persons in the establishment are not likely to be endangered;

- (b) take all reasonable precautions and adopt and carry out all reasonable techniques and procedures to ensure the health and safety of every person in his or her establishment; and

- (c) provide the first aid service requirements set out in the regulations pertaining to his or her class of establishment.

Under Section 5 of the Safety Acts:

5. Every worker employed on or in connection with an establishment shall, in the course of his or her employment,

- (a) take all reasonable precautions to ensure his or her own safety and the safety of other persons in the establishment; and

- (b) as the circumstances require, use devices and articles of clothing or equipment that are intended for his or her protection and provided to the worker by his or her employer, or required pursuant to the regulations to be used or worn by the worker.

In simpler terms, the above legislation means that legally everyone (employers and workers) plays a role in ensuring workplace safety. It takes us working together to keep each other safe. If you're not sure whether there's a violence prevention program in your workplace, speak up. Ask your Occupational Health and Safety Committee, or bring it up at your next toolbox safety meeting.

We all need to take ownership of this larger safety concern. We also need to apply the age-old saying "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The next time you find yourself in a long line at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office, or killing time at the airport after another mechanical delay, think twice before blowing up at the person behind the counter. They have the right to a safe workplace. We all have bad days but that's not an excuse to make someone else feel like BLEEP! WSCC

young worker: (noun) worker
under the age of 25

265
is the number of young worker
backs injured in
the last 5 years

265
is also the number of young worker
of injuries that could
have been prevented

I'm NOT
a no.



To learn how to protect
yourself at work, contact the
WSCC at 1-800-661-0792.

WSCC Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission

www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792

www.webnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407



Harvester's

Worksites and workers are not the same across the North. From drill rigs to dental clinics, mechanics to medical doctors, the North has a diverse economy.

Harvesting helped kick start economic growth in the North. It is considered to be the base of our traditional northern economy. Still alive and well, harvesting is a thriving industry. With the WSCC Renewable Resource Harvesters' Program, it's an industry we've got covered.

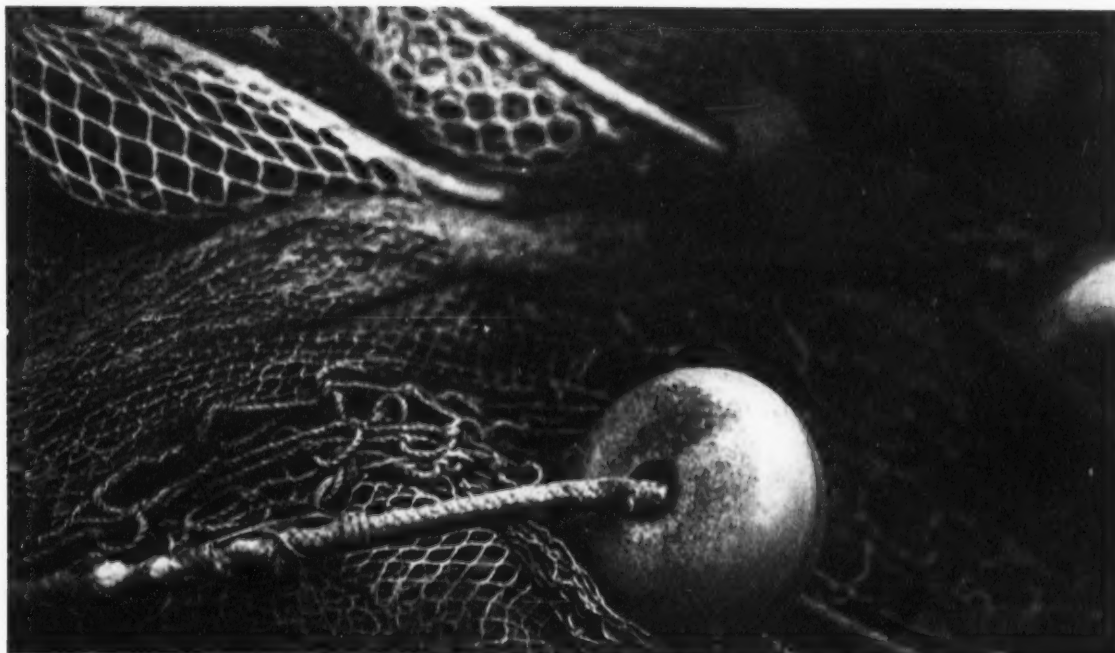
Delivered on behalf of, and paid for by, the Government of Nunavut and the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Renewable Resource

Harvesters' Program provides coverage for harvesters. Harvesters include workers who hunt, fish, trap, or gather for their living, and who make at least 25% of their income from harvesting.

"The Harvesters' Program is really unique. It recognizes our northern culture," says Donna Gathercole, a WSCC case manager. "Harvesting is not just a way of life, it's also a livelihood. With the Renewable Resource Harvesters' Program, we are able to provide harvesters with coverage, just like any other worker, should they become injured on the job."

The process starts when a qualifying harvester suffers an injury while harvesting. "The first point of contact for the harvester is often the hospital or nursing station in their community," says Gathercole. "The harvester tells the nurse or doctor that they were injured while harvesting, and then the hospital lets us know."

The WSCC may provide benefits to injured harvesters who qualify for the program. These benefits range from medical treatments, to money to help offset lost income. Benefits may continue until the harvester is well enough to go back to harvesting. The injured worker must be harvesting at



Program



the time of the injury, to qualify for coverage under the program.

"Harvesting is really no different than any other job. We provide coverage to workers who weld or build, and with the Harvesters' Program, we offer coverage to workers who harvest," adds Gathercole.

Harvesters face the same challenges that other workers face when they are injured. If a harvester is unable to go back to harvesting right after an injury, it can be an adjustment. As a result, solutions are needed to help ease the recovery process. As with any traditional occupation, culture must be taken into account when

working with injured harvesters on their recovery.

"There is a definite cultural side to the equation that we have to consider," adds Gathercole. "I remember a harvester who injured her hand. She didn't want to stay at home to recover, as her family was out on the land for that part of the season. We worked with her doctor to determine what she could do without affecting her recovery. This allowed her to be with her family while recovering from her injury. We're happy as we've been able to find a solution that helps an injured worker. The worker is happy as they are able to rejoin their family."

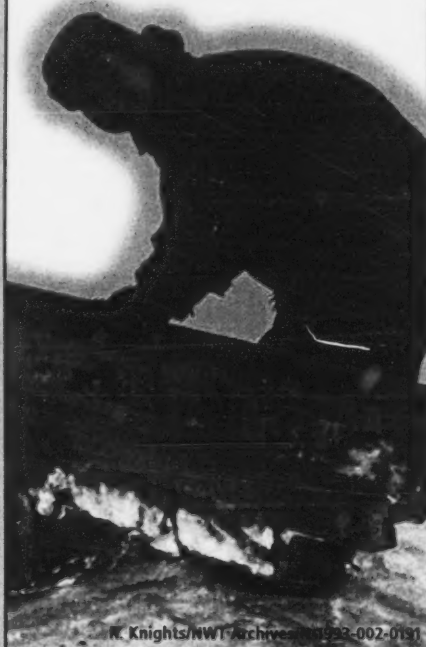
Times have changed in the North. The economic driver has shifted from the land to what lies beneath it. Despite this shift, harvesting remains alive and well; with workers still making a living and providing for their families, as generations before them have done.

For more information on the Renewable Resource Harvesters' Program, contact Claims Services at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit. wsc

Traditional Knowledge...

The WSCC is a proud sponsor
of the annual Territorial
Skills Canada Competitions
in the Northwest Territories
and Nunavut.

For more information on
workplace safety, please contact
the WSCC.



R. Knights/NWT Archives 1992-002-0191

Northwest Territories:
www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792

Nunavut:
www.wcbnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407

What's That?

Have you ever been working at your desk and had your hand or wrist start to tingle and felt a shooting pain run through your wrist and up your arm? You think, "What's That?" Have you ever woken in the middle of the night with the need to shake your hands or wrist because they are numb and wonder, "What's That?"

It could be an injury caused by repetitive strain. These injuries develop over time, and are usually caused by repetitive, forceful or awkward body movements and vibration. They can develop in many parts of your body such as your wrist, hand, shoulder, elbow, back, knee or ankle.

According to a Statistics Canada study, one out of every ten Canadian adults reported Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs) serious enough to limit their normal activities. Most were caused by work-related activities.

An RSI can develop over time, when there has been a history of wear and tear on different body parts or when you are doing tasks you are not used to. One RSI may affect nerves; another

may affect tendons or blood vessels. Some common RSIs are tennis elbow, tendonitis, and Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome. RSI symptoms will get worse over time if you don't do something to prevent it or treat it. Some of the symptoms of an RSI are:

- ▶ pain;
- ▶ swelling;
- ▶ numbness or tingling;
- ▶ decreased movement of the joint; and stiffness of the affected body part

The risk of developing an RSI can be prevented by reducing risk factors in your life and on the job. Reducing excessive repetition, high force, vibration, and awkward posture can prevent the likelihood of developing an RSI. Some examples are:

ACTIVITY	EXAMPLE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
High Force	Lifting or carrying heavy objects	Lift with a partner Use a dolly
High Repetition	Doing the same type of work for most of the day	Take breaks often Try to do other types of work
Awkward Postures	Wrists are bent in order to type or use a tool	Raise or lower what you are working on Move so it is closer to you
Vibration	Using drills or grinders at work	Take breaks often Keep equipment in good working order, to reduce vibration

If you think you could be at risk of getting an RSI, you should request to have an ergonomic assessment. An ergonomic assessment will look at the design of your work station, tools used, and how the work is organized and completed.

Always remember, prevention is the best medicine! WSCC

Don't Count on a Snow Bank to Break Your Fall



Looking outside the window, onto the white frosty surroundings, most of us are not feeling the urge to venture out and explore without our warm parka, mitts, hat, scarf, and boots. Yet far too often workers carry out their daily activities without the proper gear to do so safely.

Snow and ice are one of the realities of working in the North. Whether traveling to work, or while at work, all workers are exposed to these conditions during the winter months. A common activity, clearing snow off a roof, requires to take a proactive approach by employers and workers to ensure workers are kept safe.

Before your workers start climbing up ladders, armed with shovels, ready to tackle the snow and ice on your building's roof, make sure they know how to do it safely. This includes providing fall protection training before your workers start working at heights.

Provide the greatest level of protection against injury by partnering training with appropriate fall restraint and fall

arrest systems. Fall restraint systems prevent workers from getting into a position where a fall can happen. On flat roofs they could be as basic as guardrails. For peaked roofs, workers should have a suitable anchor that can withstand the correct amount of force. A properly adjusted retractable lanyard and harness, connected to the anchor, must prevent workers from reaching the point at which a fall can occur.

Fall arrest systems stop workers from falling too far, if a fall occurs. They limit the worker from falling any farther than four feet, and help make rescue easier. The systems require an engineered anchor that can withstand arresting forces in partnership with a harness. These systems are the failsafe in case everything else fails.

Combining training with fall arrest and restraint systems provide workers with the ability to stay safe while tackling that snowy roof. So bundle up, stay warm, stay safe....and remember, summer is only a few months away!

WSCC



... supports the skills of today.

The WSCC is a proud sponsor of the annual Territorial Skills Canada Competitions in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

For more information on workplace safety, please contact the WSCC.



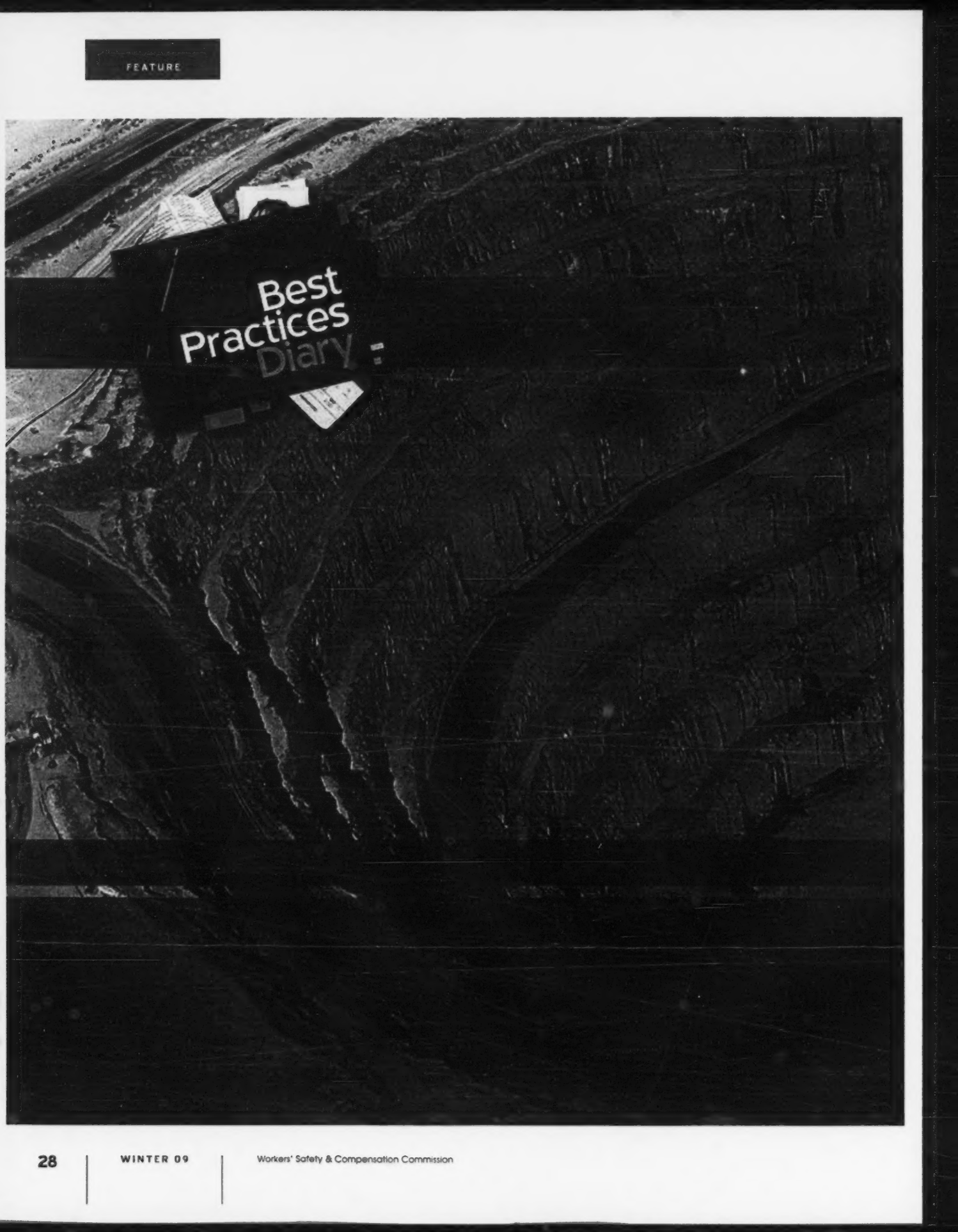
Northwest Territories:

www.wcb.nt.ca 1.800.661.0792

Nunavut:

www.wcbnunavut.ca 1.877.404.4407

WSCC Workers' Safety | *Securité des travailleurs*

An aerial, high-contrast black and white photograph of a construction site. A large crane is visible in the upper left, and a building is under construction in the center. The text 'Best Practices Diary' is overlaid on the image.

Best Practices Diary

Field Trip to Lac de Gras

BHP Billiton's EKATI Diamond Mine



Last winter, I had the pleasure of accompanying a Mine Inspector with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) on a routine site inspection to the BHP Billiton's EKATI Diamond Mine located 310 kilometers northeast of Yellowknife. This was my first visit to a diamond mine and the experience was extremely educational. I learned a lot about diamond mining and the importance safety plays in its daily operations. Here is a diary of my field trip.

JAnuaRY

January 16, 2008

06:00

Alarm went off. Very. Early.
Radio says it's minus 35. Come. On.
It's really cold and really dark outside.

06:30

Arrive at BBE terminal. Very quiet lobby.

07:00

Lobby is now packed. Still waking up.

07:15

File onto tarmac. It's still really cold and really dark. Board plane. Flight takes off.

08:15

Arrive at BHP Ekati Diamond Mine.
Flight attendant says it's minus 50.
Seriously. Warm shuttle is waiting for us.
Excellent news.

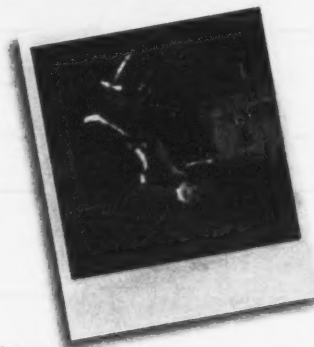
08:45

Get picture taken. Complete security check.
Enjoy quick snack. Baking is approved.

09:00

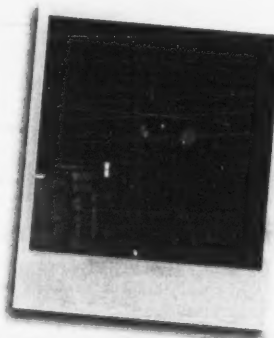
Briefed on safe worksite practices and rules. Tour common living areas. It's big. Bigger than I pictured. Tour first aid room and mine rescue emergency fire hall. Suit up in personal protective equipment (PPE) for maintenance area tour. Safety signs everywhere.

All workers must follow strict PPE safety rules. In designated areas you are required to wear specific PPE such as steel-toed boots, reflective vests, hard hats, eye protection, and ear protection.

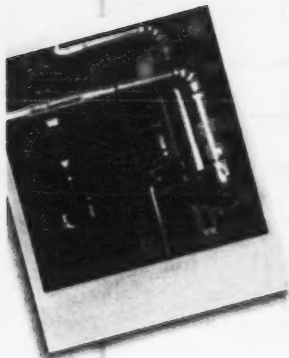
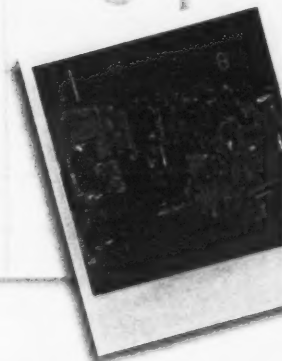


09:30

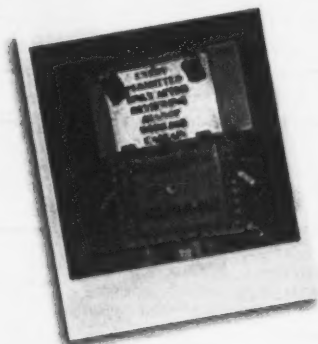
Tour equipment maintenance area. Huge machines line service bays. Tires are bigger than my entire car!



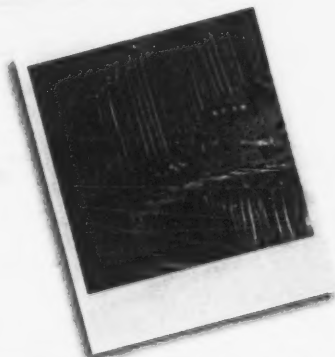
Good housekeeping techniques are diligently adhered to. Floors are routinely swept and kept clear of obstructions and clutter. Spills are immediately cleaned and absorbent cloths are used to catch and contain leaks.



Lock/Tag-out procedures are closely followed when equipment is being serviced and the area surrounding the equipment is marked off to restrict access. Only mechanics assigned to work on the equipment can enter the designated zones.



Quality control measures are taken seriously. Workers have access to a wide range of tools and parts housed in the onsite store. Workers have to sign-out tools. When tools are returned after use, they are closely inspected for damage. When required, damaged tools are repaired and re-tested before returning to store shelves for future use.



Environmental hazards are addressed. To reduce the risk of slips and falls during winter months, shop workers wear shoe-grips for extra traction when walking outside on snow and ice.



12:00

Lunch time. Lots of food choices. Dessert is delicious.

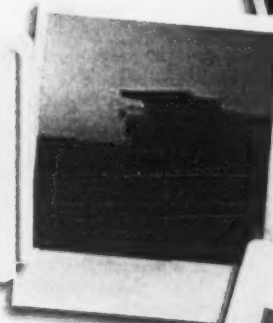
13:00

Jump in pick-up truck and start surface tour. Visit the Fox and Beartooth open pits. Blasting grid is up. Trucks are loaded with rock.



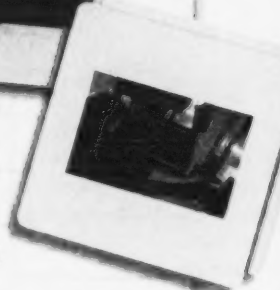
14:30

Climb aboard a 100 ton 777 Cat Haul truck. Sweet ride. Vehicles traveling mine-site roads follow strict rules. All vehicles are equipped with running lights and posted speed limits are stringently enforced.



16:00

Tour dispatch office. Advanced technology keeps workers connected. All vehicles are equipped with a global positioning system (GPS) device to track their location at all times. There is also a dispatcher working 24 hours who is in constant contact with all vehicle operators.



17:00

Dinner time. Delicious. Treats are bountiful.

January 17, 2008

07:00

Another early morning. It's still cold. Static electricity is uncontrollable. Continuously. Being. Shocked.

07:30

Quick breakfast. Personalized omelets available. Heavenly.

08:00

Received underground mine safety orientation. Change into underground mine clothes: coveralls with reflective strips, and steel-toed rubber boots.

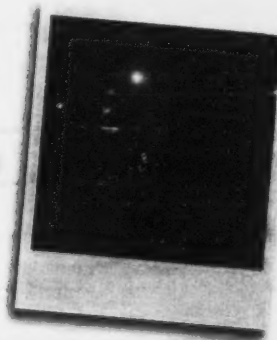
08:30

Get underground mine personal protective equipment (PPE). Sign-in as a guest on underground mine work board. All miners are required to wear specific PPE at all times while working underground. PPE includes: steel-toed boots, hard hat with miner's lamp, reflective clothing, a W65 self-rescuer (an emergency breathing apparatus that changes carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide), ear protection, and eye protection. Safe work procedures ensure the location of an underground miner is always known. At the start of their shift underground, miners have to sign-in. Each miner has an identification card they place on a common work board that shows which area of the mine they working in. Once their shift underground is finished, miners remove their identification cards from the work board. Equipment is continuously tested for quality control purposes. Breathing apparatus and miner's lamp equipment are routinely checked.

09:00

Head underground for tour. Tour drilling operation. Drill machine is not working properly. Miners discuss how to fix the problem. Tour rock crusher.

Machine takes blasted rock and breaks it into smaller pieces.



Underground mines are required by law to have refuge stations within 1000 metres of work stations. Refuge stations give miners a safe shelter to go to in the event of an emergency or fire. Refuge stations are equipped with washroom facilities, emergency food and water, blankets, first aid supplies, and are connected to a fresh air supply. For miners traveling by foot along drifts and ramps who come across vehicle traffic, there are safety bays located every 30 metres for their protection. Safety bays are large holes blasted out of the rock wall. Safety bays are marked so miners know where they are.

12:00

Lunch. Again, not disappointed.

13:30

Attend safety meeting with mine management. Management is debriefed on inspection report. Provide management with safety education for future use.

14:00

Wait for return flight. Delayed twice. Enter ping pong match. Success is mine after three short games.

15:00

Complete sign-out with security. Board bus to plane. Head back home. It is still cold and once again dark outside. WSCC

455

is the average number of workers
under the age of 25
injured every year.

See their stories and share your own at
www.DontBeANumber.ca

WSSC Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission



WSSC is based on statistics for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

WORKER RIGHTS

PARTICIPATE

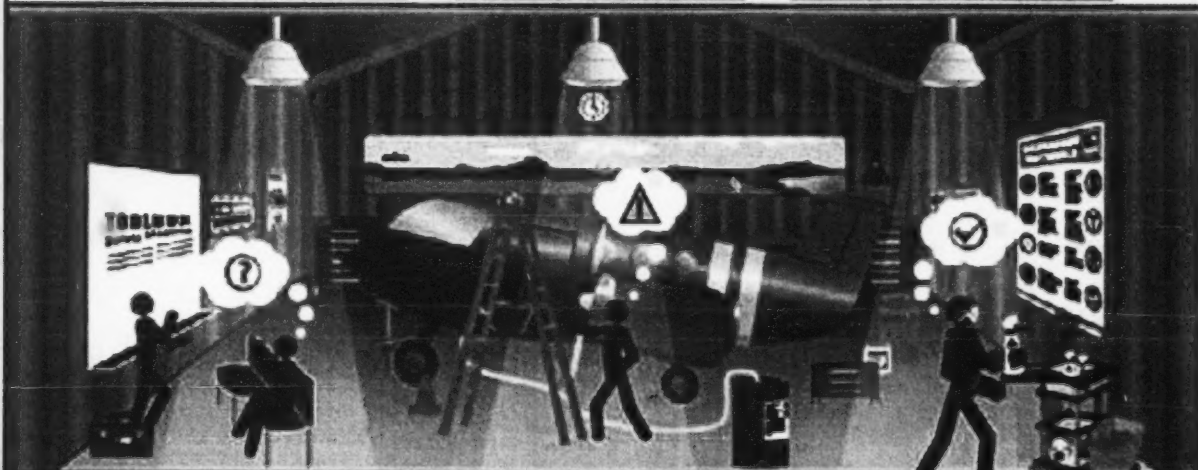
GET INVOLVED IN
WORKPLACE SAFETY

REFUSE

SPEAK UP ABOUT
UNSAFE WORK

KNOW

GET TRAINED ON
WORKPLACE SAFETY



WSSC Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission

GO SAFE. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
www.wssc.nt.ca 1.800.961.0792
www.wssc.nvut.ca 1.877.404.4407

Advice from Outside the WSCC



Debora Simpson, Workers' Advisors Office

As a worker, have you ever gotten a decision from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) and asked yourself, is there anyone outside the WSCC I can talk to about this? Someone who knows the system, someone who knows the *Workers' Compensation Act*, someone I can call. Ask yourself no more, call the Workers' Advisor.

As a worker in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut, you have access to the services of the Workers' Advisor's Office, free of charge. The Workers' Advisor's Office is independent of the WSCC, and reports directly to the Minister responsible for the WSCC.

The Workers' Advisor provides advice, assistance, and representation to injured workers and their dependants.

The Workers' Advisor can:

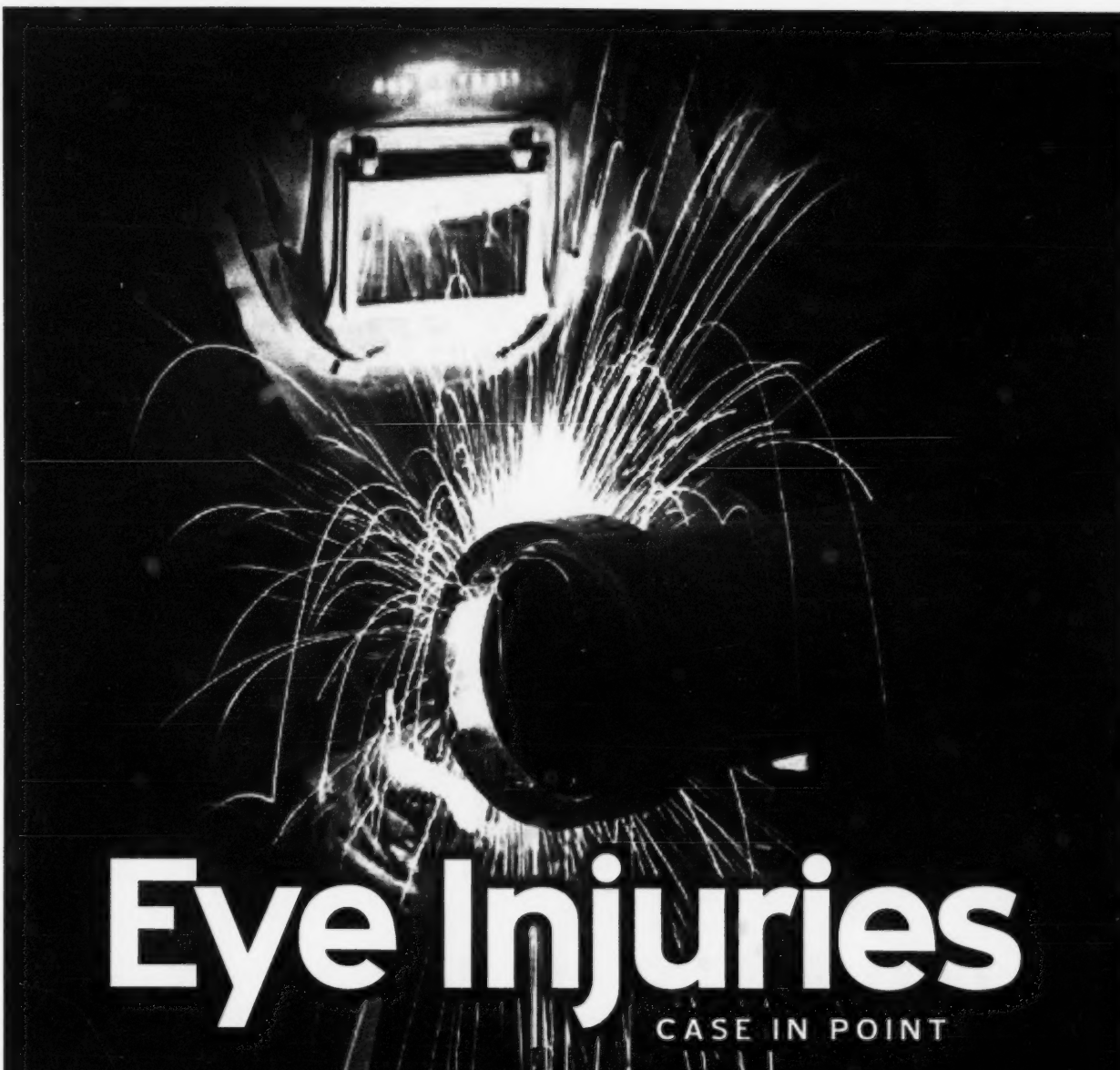
- ▶ Help you understand the *Workers' Compensation Act*, WSCC policies, and procedures;
- ▶ Provide you, or anyone who is helping you, with information about your claim;
- ▶ Help you request a review and reconsideration of a WSCC decision;
- ▶ Help you request an appeal of a WSCC Review Committee decision; and
- ▶ Represent you during a review or an appeal.

In the Northwest Territories, your Workers' Advisor is Debora Simpson. As the former Chairperson of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, she is familiar with all aspects of the WSCC and can offer you the assistance you need. Debora and her counterpart in Nunavut, Attima Hadlari of Cambridge Bay, can be reached by email at wao@theedge.ca, by phone at (867) 873-4345, or toll free at 1-877-816-0166.

"I thoroughly enjoy this work, and I think I am, and will continue making a difference for injured workers and their families," says Debora.

Need assistance with a WSCC claim, or decision? Why not call, the Workers' Advisor. WSCC

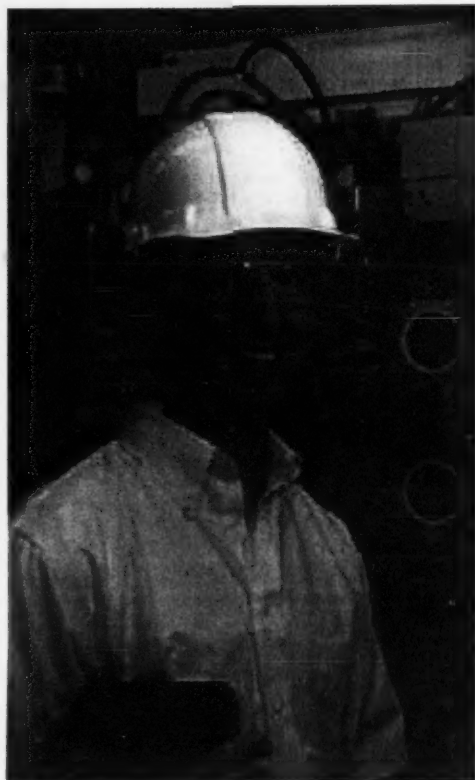




Eye Injuries

CASE IN POINT

Eye protection is a basic form of personal protective equipment (PPE) and should always be worn when you are at risk of an eye injury. It's important to remember that eye injuries can be as simple as getting soap in your eye. Workers should always be provided with appropriate eye protection by their employer when chipping, grinding, sawing, drilling, sanding, welding, plating, handling chemicals, and working in dusty conditions. Anyone working in, or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear protective eyewear. It is not good enough to just wear eye protection; it may not be the right kind. Employers must determine which protection the worker needs and have it on hand at all times. ▶



THE CASE:

A worker wearing safety glasses is underneath a car changing the oil. Dirt falls from underneath the car onto the worker's face. Dirt gets underneath the safety glasses and into his eyes.

Sometimes just wearing eye protection is not enough. It must be the right protection for what you are doing.

WHY IS EYE SAFETY IMPORTANT?

Eye injuries are the third most common type of work-related injury in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They represent 9% of all WSCC claims.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON CAUSES OF EYE INJURIES?

Common causes for eye injuries are:

- flying objects (bits of metal, glass);
- particles;
- chemicals;
- harmful radiation; and
- any combination of these or other hazards.

Workers' health and safety is a top priority. Employers are responsible for providing appropriate eye protection to all employees and ensuring it is maintained and in working order.

WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE EYE PROTECTION TO WEAR?

Always wear eye protection that fits well and is comfortable. The type of protection used depends on the hazards in the workplace.

Wear safety glasses with side protection when there are particles, flying objects, or dust in the workplace.

Goggles should be worn when working with chemicals.

Face Shields protect your face from dust and splashes and sprays from hazardous liquids. Face shields do not protect you from impact hazards, so protective eyewear should be worn under the face shield.

If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) wear safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that specific task. WSCC

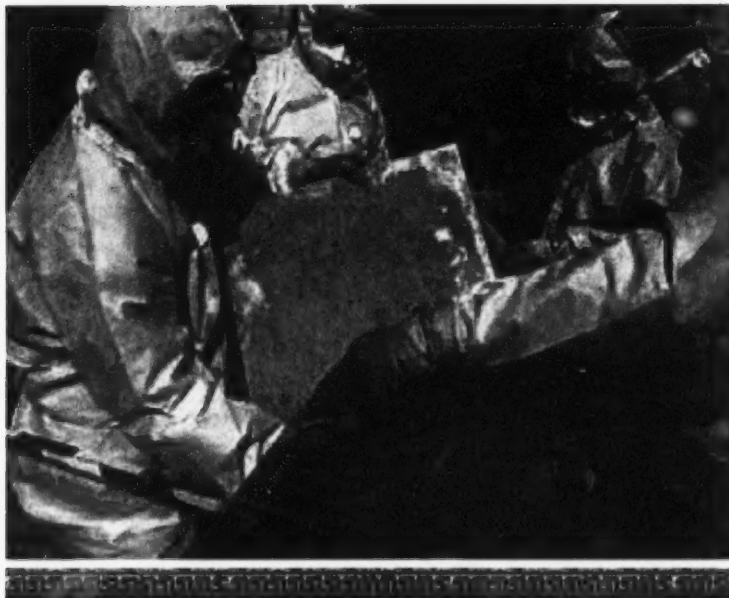


Asbestos

A HISTORY OF SAFETY

Greece has often been regarded as the birthplace of modern democracy. A little lesser known claim to fame is this Mediterranean gem is also responsible for creating the term asbestos.

Ancient Greeks discovered the fibre had unique flame-resistant properties when woven into clothing, and so they named it asbestos, which means inextinguishable. ►



A lot can change in a few thousand years. No longer used as wicks for eternal flames, or in the cremation of kings, asbestos found its calling. It became an extremely popular material, commonly used in construction and industry. What made it so popular was its incombustibility, strength, and flexibility; especially when separated into its thin fibres. It was so good that it was used in everything from shingles to children's play dough.

Workers were exposed to the mineral from its initial mining and milling, to its installation in building applications. In fact, it was once part of the building code. So how did asbestos turn into a dirty word?

The Greeks, responsible for creating the word, were also one of the first to notice something else about asbestos; workers who wove the asbestos laden clothing, developed sickness of the

lungs. As asbestos was not an obvious hazard, it took them time to notice the effects of exposure. Fast forward to the late 1960's and history was already well into a repeat.

Cara Benoit, a WSCC Industrial Hygienist, has heard first hand how things used to be. "I've heard many times of how you'd see guys who were working with asbestos, blowing it into attics for insulation. They'd come out covered in it from head to toe with no thoughts of personal protective equipment," says Benoit. "Workers and employers were just not aware of the damage that could be done." With the times changing even further, the effects of asbestos exposure now regularly make news headlines. One of the most staggering ones is that worldwide, 100,000 workers die each year from asbestos-related diseases. The reality is asbestos-related deaths are not expected to peak until 2010 to

2020. This is because symptoms may not surface until 20-50 years after the asbestos exposure occurred.

Though shocking, these headlines and their wide spread exposure have also helped increase awareness. According to Benoit, awareness is the driving force behind the change in behaviour surrounding asbestos. "Public awareness has helped in educating both employers and workers, so asbestos is viewed as an occupational hazard. They know they need to take action when working in areas where they may encounter it."

In the North, asbestos also found its uses. Some houses and office buildings were built with asbestos insulation in their attics. In addition, a lot of the utilidors used to provide water and sewer services in communities in the NWT and Nunavut, were also insulated with asbestos.

Currently, one of the most common ways workers can come in contact with asbestos is through renovations. As asbestos was commonly used in construction up until the late 1980's, it is often found when older buildings are renovated. Workers that complete these overhauls must follow specific practices and procedures.

This includes determining the exposure risk for the asbestos.

A common approach is the use of an exposure matrix, which is a fancy word for a table that helps you figure out how likely you are to be exposed to asbestos. This table takes into account three main factors:

1. Accessibility of material:

How likely people are to be exposed to the material.

2. Condition of the material:

How structurally sound the material is. This ranges from being severely damaged to being in good condition.

3. Friability of the material:

How easily it crumbles when touched.

These three factors are rated from high to low in the table. If one of the factors rate high, you'll have to follow a higher level of safety precautions and use more protective equipment than if the factors rated low. The idea is that the level of protection matches the level of risk.

"A worker removing floor tiles with a low friability would use hand tools and follow less stringent precautions while removing them, where as a worker who is completing a roof repair in an attic containing asbestos insulation which has a high friability, would follow more stringent safety precautions," says Benoit. Once the exposure risk has been determined it is easier for workers to take the level of precaution required to work safely.

Employers are also able to play a proactive role in helping their employees stay safe while working on projects that may expose their workers to asbestos. If an employer is working on a building renovation, they can evaluate the building material to determine hazards and follow safety practices which protect their workers.

Cara explains it isn't always easy to know if asbestos is present.

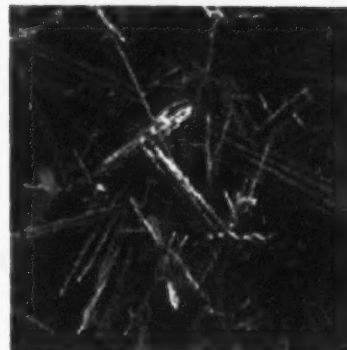
"You can't tell by looking if asbestos is in a building's material, it has to be sent to a lab to be sure. If the asbestos is in a good condition, it may be fine to leave it as it may pose more risk if you disturb it."

A best practice for building owners is to complete a building inventory. This works by cataloguing the materials present in the buildings that may contain asbestos. The inventory then allows owners to gauge in advance what precautions workers may need to take for future renovations.

Northern employers play a crucial role in asbestos safety for their workers. This includes providing training to workers before they work on a project where they are likely to encounter asbestos. "We require employers to also provide a Notification of Project (NOP), and a list of safety procedures they will follow with their project," says Benoit. "This plan, in partnership with education and training, helps keep workers safe."

We have come a long way from the days of workers weaving asbestos into clothing. As our knowledge of asbestos has grown, so have our safety practices. "Learning from the mistakes of the past allows us to avoid repeating them," says Benoit. "Adopting a best practices approach to safety allows us to move forward, helping workers stay safe."

For more information contact WSCC Prevention Services at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit. wsc

**as.bes.tos** [as-bes-tuhs, az-]

1. **Mineralogy.** a fibrous mineral, either amphibole or chrysotile, formerly used for making incombustible or fireproof articles.
 2. a fabric woven from asbestos fibers, formerly used for theater curtains, firefighters' gloves, etc.
 3. **Theater.** a fireproof curtain.
- Also, **as-bes-tus**.

Origin:

1350-1400; α L α Gk: *lit.*, unquenched, equiv. to *a-* α β + *sbestos* (*sbes-* var. s. of *sbennynai* to quench + *-tos* ptp. suffix); *r.* ME *asbeston*, *albeston* α MF α L

Asbestos Quick Facts

Two main mineral types of asbestos:

Serpentine: Contains only chrysotile or "white" asbestos. Chrysotile asbestos accounts for approximately 90 % of current world consumption

Amphibole: Only two types have had significant commercial use: amosite or "brown" asbestos, and crocidolite or "blue" asbestos.

- The average diameter of an airborne asbestos fibre is approximately 300 times thinner than a human hair.
- Asbestos related diseases are caused by asbestos fibres that workers breathe in and settle in their lungs. Once embedded the fibres remain in the body for a long time.
- Two common conditions that may result from significant inhalation of asbestos fibres include asbestosis, and mesothelioma- a cancer of the lining of the lungs.

Employer Assessments

As an employer in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut you have to pay assessments to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC). It's a cost of doing business, just like paying rent or the power bill. What you may not know is where your money goes, what you get in return, and what the process is for paying assessments.

Employer assessments are put into the Workers' Protection Fund, and are used to promote workplace safety and care for injured workers. This fund is used to help people when help is needed.

By paying assessments, you get no-fault insurance, and work-related personal injury cases are kept out of court.

The actual process of paying your assessments can be confusing if you don't understand the steps. It's important to know key dates and write them in your calendar.

Employer Assessment Process:

1) Register your business. New companies must report their payroll within 10 days of starting or restarting operations, and provide an estimated payroll for the upcoming year.

2) As part of an annual cycle, the WSCC mails you an Employer Payroll Statement in December of each year.

On the Employer Payroll Statement you provide the actual payroll paid in the previous year and an estimate of what might be paid in the coming year. Your estimate can be changed by contacting WSCC Employer Services at anytime throughout the year if there are changes.

3) You must complete this statement and submit it on or before February 28. This gives you two months to complete a three page form.

If you do not send in your Employer Payroll Statement by February 28, your estimated payroll is deemed by the WSCC. This means, the WSCC uses your payroll from the previous year and adds an additional 15%. A late reporting penalty is also assessed. It is 15% of the assessment you paid in the

previous year. This penalty can be as little as \$25.00 or as much as \$10,000. So, is it really worth the additional costs not to have the paperwork in by February 28? Not when it's easy to avoid, you know the additional costs up front!

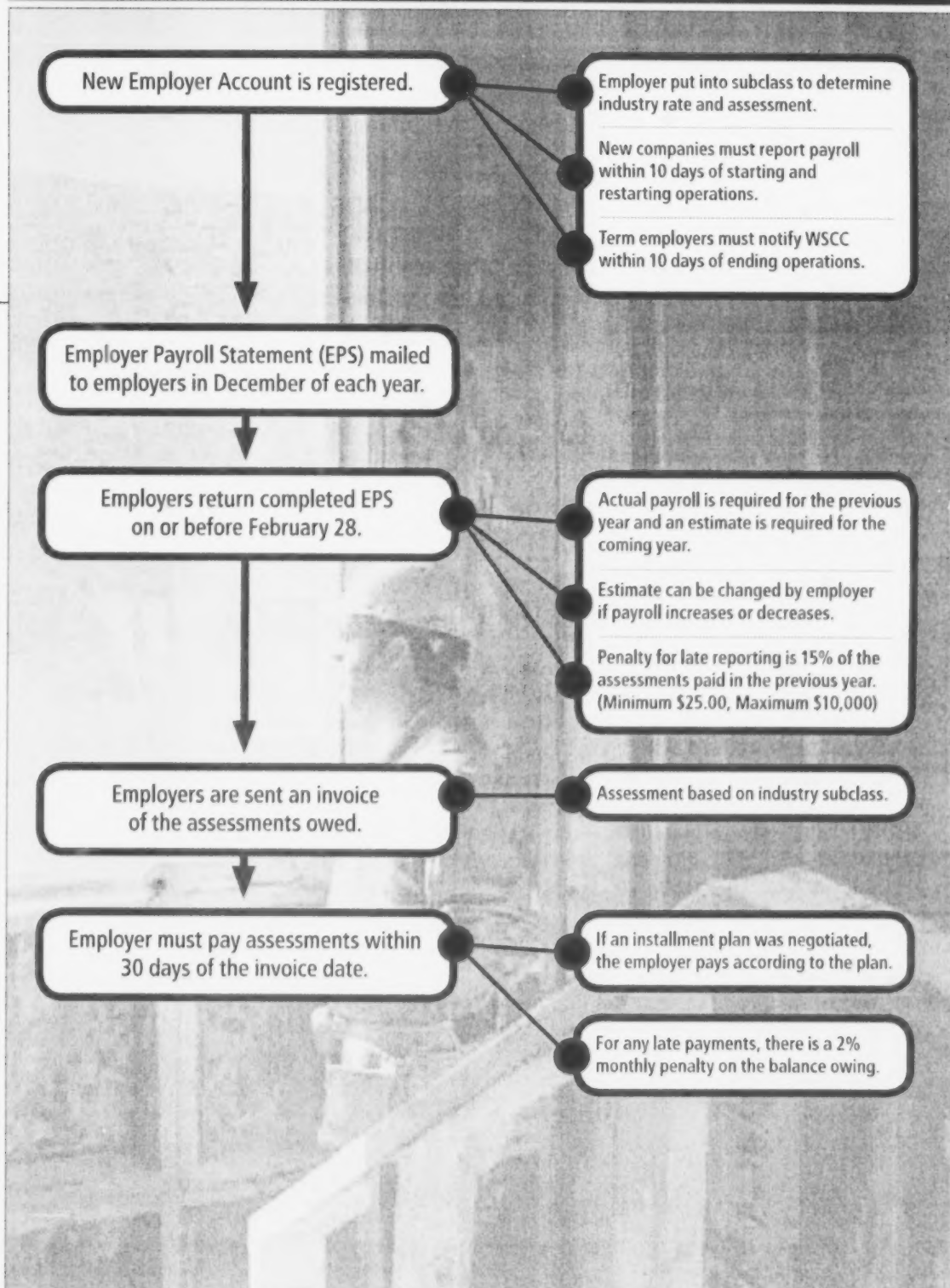
4) WSCC reviews the payroll information you provide, applies your industry rate (the rate you pay for every \$100 of assessable payroll) and sends you an assessment invoice.

5) Assessments must be paid within 30 days of the date on the invoice unless a payment plan has been approved by the WSCC. Interest charges of 2%, on the balance owing, will also be applied if payments are not received on time.

You don't want to pay penalties and we really don't want to charge them. So remember February 28 every year, and have your Employer Payroll Statement submitted. This day should be as important to employers as Christmas is to kids.

For more information on the WSCC assessment process, contact Employer Services in Yellowknife at 1-800-661-0792, or in Iqaluit at 1-877-404-4407. WSCC

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT PROCESS





Work Safe:

It's to your Advantage.

Put money back into your pockets by improving and maintaining excellent levels of safety in your workplace.

Safe Advantage is a Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission program.

Safe Advantage gives refunds to big companies with good safety cultures.

SAFETY PAYS!

WSCC

Workers' Safety
& Compensation Commission

$$\Delta^{\text{sb}} \mathbf{b}_a \Delta^{\text{sb}} \Pi_{\mathbf{b}}^c \Delta^c (\mathbf{a}^{\text{sb}}) \sigma^{\text{b}}$$

$$\mathbf{a}^{\text{c}} \mathbf{L} \mathbf{a}^{\text{c}} \mathbf{c}^{\text{b}} \mathbf{d} \mathbf{L} \sigma^{\text{b}} \mathbf{b} \mathbf{d} \mathbf{a}^{\text{c}} \mathbf{a}^{\text{c}} \mathbf{b}$$

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